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Humanizing Industry

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THE war revealed great industrial discontent in our country, and our consequent weakness in time of stress and emergency. Lack of loyalty and lukewarmness of patriotism appeared more common among the industrial workers than elsewhere. The I. W. W. we regarded as distinctly disloyal. For their disloyalty some of us simply blamed them, or possibly put the blame upon German agents. The actual fact is, however, that the war only revealed, and Germany took advantage of, a dangerous weakness which already existed. Any propaganda among the I. W. W. simply indicated the cunning of Germany in finding the weak spot in our armor.

The fault of the I. W. W. is not primarily with its members, but with our existing social and industrial system. There is something radically wrong, of which the I. W. W. is a symptom. We must try to get an understanding of this, not stop at mere blame of its victims.

The extent of industrial unrest will be further discovered, and the discontent will be aggravated now with the sudden reversion to peace and the demobilizing of the army. The experience of Canada, for instance, has already shown that returned soldiers are not good workers because they are not satisfied with their old humdrum existence after their exciting adventures abroad. Ninety per cent of them, it has been asserted, are discontented.

Organized labor has the right to say here, as it is already saying in England: "We have done our bit and served our country. What is our country going to do for us?" And this is a pertinent question.

The German Government did everything for the workingman *before* the war. Therefore, when the war came the laborer felt that he owed his country something. He was willing, in return, to make sacrifices for his country. That was his attitude subconsciously, at least, even if not reasoned out. It is upon this subconscious sense of gratitude that patriotism and morale are

always, in the last analysis, dependent. Now the people of Germany understand the situation and a complete breakdown of morale is the result.

There are great changes necessary and imminent in bringing which, I believe, we should coöperate with the workingman. It will not be mere increase of wages and reduction of hours, though these reforms are the two things stressed in the demands of the labor unions. These needs have constituted the "labor problem" in the minds of most of us, but they will, I believe, largely take care of themselves,—at least, with the help of the labor unions.

There is a more fundamental reform upon which they are, to a great degree, dependent. Christ stated a great industrial truth when he said, "Man shall not live by bread alone."

WAGES DEPENDENT ON HEALTH

Of the many rights which the workman has heretofore only partially enjoyed, the greatest is the right to healthful conditions. Many do not recognize the importance of this right, but a few labor leaders, like Arthur Holder, are giving it more attention as a great factor in industrial success. Health is the workingman's capital, his only important asset. The man with money, the capitalist, does not need health as a means of making a living. If he falls ill, he can "live on his money." But if the laboring man loses his health, he loses the power to earn his living. His wages, which we consider so all-important, are dependent on his health.

Some people say that if his wages were raised, his health would be improved. This is doubtless true, but it is still truer that if his health were improved, his wages would be increased. To improve slightly an individual's health will not necessarily, it is true, nor always, increase that individual's wages; but if we increase, even slightly, the health, and thereby the working power of the nation as a whole, the general wage level will rise. In the last analysis wages depend on productive power, and the workingman's power to produce is dependent on his muscle and brain, i.e., his health.

A good illustration of this truth is to be found in the story of the hookworm disease in the South. The hookworm is called the germ of laziness. It produces anemia and saps energy. The

Rockefeller Hookworm Commission, by an expenditure of about 65 cents per capita, cured the disease by wholesale and made the Southern poor-whites once more into working citizens. With regained health, a worker could produce, at the least, enough to make every day a 100 per cent return on the 65 cents invested in his health!

Great returns are to be had from investments by employers in factory sanitation, lighting, and ventilation; and by the workingman in better and better selected food, housing, clothing, sports, amusements and books on health; and by the state in hospitals, sanatoria, dispensaries, health departments, health insurance, factory inspection, labor legislation, school hygiene, recreation, etc.

The workingman should have not only physical health but also mental health. Mental health depends on the satisfaction of certain fundamental instincts. If these major instincts are not fairly well satisfied, our lives will be failures, ending in the insane asylum or penitentiary. A human being whose instincts are balked becomes an enemy of society. This is the real reason for the I. W. W., as was emphasized by Prof. Carleton H. Parker, of the University of Washington, who, by personal contact and deep insight, probably knew more about that much discussed organization than any one else. The members of the I. W. W. were, he saw, not innately anti-social, but became so because they had individual initiative and a will of their own, and refused to conform, like the ordinary workman, to the Procrustean bed of industry today. They rebelled, like the small boys of a large city without playgrounds who break windows for excitement. When boys become so destructive, we give them, not a jail sentence, but a place to play; or at any rate the Juvenile Court recognizes that the delinquency is simply a miscarriage of the boys' legitimate instincts.

The I. W. W. workman is the naughty boy of industry. We have not given him the outlet which he must have. The very energy which breaks through and makes him destructive would, if enlisted for constructive work, have made him a more useful workman than his more docile and less energetic brother. It may be too late to reclaim him now, but we can at least prevent the making of more of his kind.

MAJOR INSTINCTS IN THE WORKMAN'S LIFE

I shall name seven major instincts which apparently must be satisfied to make a normal life. First, there is the instinct of self-preservation. The securing of a living wage must always be the first concern of a workingman. This has always been recognized as basic, and I need not therefore dilate upon it. Furthermore, self-preservation demands the maintenance of healthy working conditions, the prevention of over-fatigue and the provision of safety devices. No man can do his work well if he feels that it is fitting him only for the scrap heap. Finally, every employe should be assured of a steady job so long as he does his part. If he has to be "laid off" without any fault of his own, he should have due notice or a suitable dismissal wage. Fear of unemployment dissipates energy.

Secondly, there is the instinct of self-expression, or workmanship. Until modern industry contrives to satisfy this instinct in the ordinary workman, our labor problem will not be solved. I shall consider this below in greater detail.

Thirdly, there is the instinct of self-respect. Unless the workman is made to feel that "A man's a man, for a' that," he will be our enemy, will cherish a grievance, and will become anti-social.

The employer should, so far as possible, use praise for incentive rather than blame. If it is really necessary to call a man down, the rebuke need not be administered before his fellow-workers. The workman should be considered trustworthy until he has proved himself untrustworthy. Rivalry in production involves the satisfaction of the instinct of self-respect.

Fourthly, there is the instinct of loyalty. The universality of this instinct is strikingly illustrated in this war. Devotion to a cause, sacrifice for this cause, heroism if you like, have been shown by soldiers whose whole training has been one of monotonous industry. The instinct of loyalty should be satisfied in industry, as it is in the trenches. The employer often misses a great opportunity to be his workingmen's hero or honored general instead of their task master.

If the men can organize, a team spirit will develop. Collective bargaining and other forms of control of the industry by the men will forestall useless "knocking" and discontent and will develop loyalty instead. Mass activities, group singing, marching in a

parade, wearing a button or cheering a baseball team will develop and foster a united feeling.

Pride is an important constituent of loyalty. Workers have a right to expect that their plant is one worth being proud of. Fundamentally, loyalty is based on justice and mutual consideration. The employer who can best put himself in the place of his men best secures their loyalty. Extra work or overtime can, by loyal workmen, be "volunteered" with pleasure where "conscription" might arouse ill-feeling.

The great instinct of love, or of home-making, is a fifth instinct, and one vital for society. The homeless, migratory I. W. W. is an example of what occurs when life is deprived of its satisfaction. A man thinks of his own family as part of himself. His success means their happiness. Any action on the employer's part which affects family welfare immediately arouses resentment. The unrest caused by inability to enjoy family life or by bad instinctive life outside the plant is demoralizing. In a word, conditions of employment should, in every way, conduce to a happy family life.

The workingman's instinct of worship, if we may properly speak of such a faculty as a sixth instinct, hungers and thirsts for righteousness and often is not filled. If his daily work appeals to his whole nature and not merely to a portion of it, the task will be exalted to become really a part of his religion. No man should have to do work which is degrading or which will tend to crush idealism or warp the spirit of humanity and service.

Finally, the play impulse must be satisfied to produce mental health. The saying, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," is true of the laboring man.

Some instincts are almost inevitably repressed, and, deprived of a wise outlet, are in danger of an unrestrained outburst. Play provides a safety valve. This play should not be frivolity, still less dissipation, but entertainment which will develop physical and mental health and a broadened outlook on life. A long workday makes proper play impossible, and is largely responsible for a man's resort to drink and other perversions of play.

Of the seven mentioned, only the instinct of self-preservation is even fairly well satisfied by the majority of workers. We thrum too continually on this one string. Human nature is a harp of many strings. We must use the rest of the octave.

THE INSTINCT OF WORKMANSHIP

The instinct of workmanship has been all but crowded out. So gradual and subtle has been the change that we do not recognize it until we suddenly note the contrast. Like the art of making iridescent glass which, since the iridescence was due to imperfections in the process of glass making, was lost without the loss being realized as that process was gradually perfected, so the instinct of workmanship has been dropped out by the very perfection of modern industry. While attending so closely to the product, we have forgotten the psychology of the producer. While making one man perfect in one point and another in another point, we have sacrificed the satisfaction of both. The monotonous nature of the work, and the fact that the workman does not see his product, are the characteristics of modern industry which cripple the effort that instinct could put into the work, and which are responsible for the dissatisfaction and unrest. Get rid of them, and the main (though not the only) obstacle to industrial peace will be gone.

In modern industry, individuality is lost,—each man's work is thrown in a common pool. In former days, the cobbler made the pair of shoes and watched their progress, inquiring of the wearer, "How do they wear today?" The artist similarly has the joy of self-expression and creation in his picture.

Text-books of economics today make the statement that the motive for work is money-making, with the exception that artists and scientists work for the joy that their work gives them. There is no greater fallacy than to make this contrast. The workman has this same power, though latent, of enjoying self-expression in his work. Our usual acceptance of this fallacy shows how far we are off the track.

President Eliot of Harvard once spoke in Boston on the joy of work. The next week a labor leader in the same hall spoke with a scornful laugh of the "high brow's" reference to such "joy" and the crowd of workingmen present approvingly joined in his ridicule. This incident is pathetic evidence that joy of work is too often conspicuous by its absence. When I first became conscious of this fact, I was loath to publish my opinions. I was not sufficiently experienced in the field either as laborer or employer. I wanted to wait until I could see the ideas tested.

In the last year Miss Marot's book "The Creative Impulse in Industry," and Ordway Tead's on "The Instincts in Industry," have given expression to substantially these same conclusions. From still another angle Carleton H. Parker had reached similar views. The strongest evidence of their truth, however, is the experience of Robert B. Wolf, who has applied them in the practical management of a paper pulp factory.

What did Wolf do? He introduced into his mill a system of record-charts by which each individual workman could see what his contribution to the product was. Just as in baseball, we are interested in the score; and just as in school, students find grades an incentive, so the workmen were stimulated by having and making a record. The curves and charts which Wolf devised gave an opportunity for such expression as the artist or handicraftsman enjoys.

Before Wolf came to the mill, where he tried out these ideas, there used to be discontent. On his arrival as manager, there was a strike on, and pickets surrounding the yards. The mill owner told him to get that energy that was called out by the strike into the making of wood-pulp. In strikes, as in the trenches, there is the satisfaction of the instincts.

At first antagonistic to Wolf's innovations, the men soon saw the "new game" and in striving to excel in it, found a constructive outlet for the impulses that had previously gone into destructive channels. They no longer have to make trouble in order to have the feeling of "something doing." Discontent is gone. It has sometimes been necessary to change a man's work, but almost never to discharge a man for inefficiency. The tendency of letting men slip into dead-end jobs is overcome. Mentally and physically each man is suited to his job. Promotions and the development of all-round ability are encouraged. The work becomes educative, as the workman, watching his progress, masters the process until he can himself invent improvements in the technique.

I have sometimes illustrated the fact that employes need other than monetary inducements, in this way: Suppose President Wilson, as General Pershing's employer, had said to the General when he called him to the White House before sending him overseas:

"Now, Pershing, you are going to do a job for me. I want it well done. I know you will shirk if you have a chance. I therefore want to hitch up your interests with mine. Your pay will depend on your victories. I'll pay you a bonus for every German killed and another for every German taken prisoner. I'll pay you also for overtime beyond eight hours a day."

How would General Pershing reply to such "inducements," especially when put forward as though President Wilson assumed that he could not be expected to feel any other motive than the mercenary one? Would he not have replied:

"Here is my resignation, Mr. President. You have insulted me. What do you take me for? Of course a man must live, but money is the last thing I am thinking of now. I want to fight for my country, for you, for our ideals, for glory, and for the satisfaction of expressing whatever is in me of military genius."

An objector might say, "But Pershing is a general, an artist in his line, an exceptional man." Were not the common soldiers under him fighting with the same motives? And were they not the very same men who were formerly in shops working merely for pay? The army affords the most supreme illustration of men motivated by entirely different instincts than simply self-preservation or "making a living." Instincts which had been repressed or dormant up to this point in their lives were found far more powerful in these workmen soldiers than the instinct of making a living. When, as ex-soldiers, they come back to be workmen again they will unconsciously miss something and unless it is supplied them, there will be trouble. We must satisfy their higher instincts. The employer must see in the workman his brother man, of the same flesh and blood, with the same soul-hunger, needing the same soul-food to satisfy it.